

Proclamation 7649—Irish-American Heritage Month, 2003

February 28, 2003

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

From the earliest days of our Republic, America has inspired the hopes and dreams of countless individuals from around the world who have come to share in our gifts of freedom, justice, and opportunity. During Irish-American Heritage Month, we celebrate the contributions of these talented and industrious citizens and recognize their rich legacy of ingenuity, creativity, and achievement.

Throughout our history, America has welcomed millions of Irish immigrants to its shores. These proud people arrived seeking a better life for themselves, their families, and future generations. Many courageous individuals came during the terrible years of Ireland's Great Famine in the middle of the 19th century, and their road to prosperity was not easy. Many faced significant obstacles, including discrimination and poverty. Despite these challenges, Irish Americans have risen to success in every sector of our society.

Americans of Irish descent have played a vital role in shaping our history and culture. Nineteen Presidents of the United States have claimed Irish heritage. One-third to one-half of the American troops during the Revolutionary War and 9 of the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence were Irish Americans. Irish Americans explored our frontiers, built many of our Nation's bridges, canals, and railroads, and their proud record of public service helped to fortify our democracy.

In all areas of American life, Irish Americans have made significant and enduring contributions to our great country. America is a better Nation because of the efforts of Irish Americans like Henry Ford, who spurred innovation; Bing Crosby, who entertained countless people around the world; and activist Mary Kenney O'Sullivan, who worked for critical and compassionate social reform. These individuals are just a few of the many Irish Americans who helped to transform our

national identity and whose accomplishments reflect the determination, joy, and hope of the Irish. The faith, perseverance, and spirit of the Irish have helped to strengthen our families, our communities, our ideals, and our national character.

Today, approximately one in four Americans can trace their ancestry in part to Ireland's green shores, and we are proud of and grateful for the many Irish Americans who continue to enrich our country.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 2003 as Irish-American Heritage Month. I call upon all Americans to observe this month by learning about and commemorating the contributions of Irish Americans to our Nation.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-eighth day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-seventh.

George W. Bush

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Proclamation 7650—National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, 2003

February 28, 2003

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Colorectal cancer touches the lives of many Americans. This year, it is estimated that more than 148,000 new cases of colorectal cancer will be diagnosed. More than 56,000 people may die from this disease, making it a leading cause of cancer death in our Nation. We have achieved great progress in understanding what causes

colorectal cancer, and how it develops and spreads. This fourth national observance once again helps increase awareness. Increased awareness can help us reach my Administration's goal, known as "Healthy People 2010," administered by the Department of Health and Human Services, to reduce the rate of colorectal cancer deaths by 34 percent by the year 2010.

Like many cancers, the development of colorectal cancer can take many years. Screening is an important tool to help detect colorectal cancer early by identifying precancerous growths or polyps, when treatment is more likely to be successful.

More than 90 percent of people who are diagnosed with colorectal cancer are over the age of 50. Yet, recent data indicates that less than 40 percent of adults age 50 or older have had one of the available colorectal cancer screening tests within recommended intervals. Researchers estimate that if everyone age 50 or older received regular colorectal cancer screenings, at least one-third of the deaths would be prevented.

Individuals must realize the importance of talking with their healthcare providers about when to begin screening, which tests to have, the benefits and risks of each test, and how often to schedule appointments. To help our citizens detect this disease, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) provides Medicare coverage for regular colorectal cancer screening tests to help detect precancerous conditions or colorectal cancer early.

The National Cancer Institute (NCI), a component of the National Institutes of Health, is the Nation's principal research agency in the fight against colorectal cancer. The NCI invested approximately \$245 million in 2002, and it will dedicate an estimated \$267 million this year to advance our understanding of this disease. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also plays an important role in our efforts to save lives and reduce the burden of colorectal cancer. Last year, the CDC allocated \$12 million to educate the public and health professionals about colorectal cancer screening, and to conduct and support research efforts related to increasing national colorectal cancer screening rates.

The CDC, CMS, and NCI are participating together in the Screen for Life: National Colorectal Cancer Action Campaign to educate Americans aged 50 and older, particularly minority groups, about the benefits of colorectal cancer screening. Another coordinated effort is the Health Disparities Collaboratives, a public-private partnership that involves the Health Resources and Services Administration, CDC, NCI, and the Institute for Healthcare Improvement. These groups are focusing on screening and follow-up care for people who traditionally lack access to quality health care.

During this month, I encourage Americans to join me in the crucial effort to save lives by taking action against colorectal cancer by talking with healthcare providers about screening, telling friends and family members about the importance of early detection, and providing support for those diagnosed with colorectal cancer. By working together to increase awareness and supporting research about this disease, we can make a difference in the lives of our citizens and people around the world.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 2003 as National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. I call upon all Americans to reaffirm our Nation's continuing commitment to controlling and curing colorectal cancer.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-eighth day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-seventh.

George W. Bush

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Proclamation 7651—Women’s History Month, 2003

February 28, 2003

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

As our Founding Fathers worked to develop the framework of our Nation, Abigail Adams wrote to her husband: “I long to hear that you have declared an independency—and by the way in the new Code of Laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make I desire you would Remember the Ladies, and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors.” An early advocate of women’s rights, a farm and financial manager, and the mother of an American President, John Quincy Adams, Abigail Adams is one of many American women who helped establish the strength and vitality of our Nation. During Women’s History Month, we recognize the generations of American women whose important contributions continue to shape our Nation and enrich our society.

Through vision, hard work, and determination, countless American women have broadened opportunities for themselves and for others at home, in the community, and in the workplace. In 1809, Mary Kies became the first woman to receive a U.S. patent. By developing a method of weaving straw with silk, she helped advance American industry and set an inspiring example for other American women. Her pioneering efforts helped define our country’s entrepreneurial spirit and paved the way for future generations of women to take pride in their talents and creativity.

Since Mary Kies’ groundbreaking achievement, many American women have become successful entrepreneurs and business professionals. In 1905, Madam C.J. Walker started her own business by creating and selling hair care products for African-American women. After a decade, her company was highly successful and employed more than 3,000 people, and at the time, was the largest African-American owned business in the United States. Today, Madam Walker is remembered for her business accomplish-

ments, efforts to create new opportunities for women, and for her contributions to her community.

Driven by the legacy of these extraordinary figures, American women from all backgrounds continue to break barriers and fulfill their personal and professional potential. At the dawn of the 21st century, women have more choices than ever before. Between 1992 and 2002, the number of female college graduates in the United States has increased from 15.9 million to 23.6 million. Women account for 47 percent of all employed persons and are entering the American workforce in record numbers. In the last 10 years, their ranks have increased by 8.7 million. Furthermore, women-owned small businesses are growing twice as fast as all other U.S. firms, employing 7 million Americans and contributing to the vitality of our economy. To build on these successes, my Administration will continue our work to promote policies that advance the aspirations, hopes, and dreams of every American.

This month, as we celebrate remarkable women in our Nation’s past, I encourage all citizens to recognize the countless American women whose efforts continue to enhance the economic, social, and cultural life of our great Nation.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 2003 as Women’s History Month. I call upon all the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate ceremonies and activities and to remember throughout the year the many contributions of American women.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-eighth day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-seventh.

George W. Bush

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